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ABSTRACT

A general frame of reference for a comprehensive model of socialization is presented. This model considers different levels of theoretical analysis and a methodological combination of investigations of the "objective" social reality with "subjective" interpretations of reality as it is in the Federal Republic of Germany. The meta-theoretical model of the subject in socialization research, the principles of theory construction in this discipline, and pluralistic methodological procedures are discussed. An interdisciplinary approach is needed which will provide for a division of labor between sociology, psychology, and educational science within the framework of an integrative program of research. (BZ)

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COMPREHENSIVE SOCIALIZATION THEORY IN RESEARCH ON ADOLESCENCE AND YOUTH

by

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MAY 1984

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Comprehensive Socialization Theory in Research on Adolescence and Youth

In this paper I shall present a general frame of reference for a comprehensive model of socialization which considers different levels of theoretical analysis and a methodological combination of investigations of the "objective" social reality with "subjective" interpretations of reality. My main aim is to transfer those points of consensus which are now emerging in the discussion about theory and methodology of socialization research to the field of research on adolescence and youth as phases in the course of life.

I shall discuss (1) the meta-theoretical model of the subject in socialization research, (2) the principles of theory construction in this field, and (3) pluralistic methodological procedures. For each point I shall elaborate the implications for the research on adolescence and youth. My plea is for an interdisciplinary approach which will provide for a division of labor between sociology, psychology, and educational science within the framework of an integrative program of research. My starting point is the discussion in the Federal Republik of Germany.

1. The meta-theoretical model of the subject in socialization research

For many years, most of the sociological approaches to socialization theory have tended to lose sight of the individual human being. The idea of the social determination of the individual - where it was understood in the sense of a one-sided determination - necessarily led to a shift of research interest to social and material conditions and ultimately to an elimination of the category of the subject as a self-determining factor in social processes. Accordingly, no significant role was attributed to psychological reasoning.

In recent sociological approaches to socialization theory, there has been an increasing tendency to include an explicit elaboration of the subject. Typical of these approaches is, first, that they systematically assert that man is conditioned by society, not in the sense of a mechanistic

milieu-determinism, but of a human being as an acting subject. Second, they formulate the central point of any socialization theory, i.e. the transition from objective conditions to subjective formations, in concepts such as, for example, appropriation and action which are rooted both in an external and a psycho-internal reality. Third, they comprehend social conditions in the context of a theory of a historically developing society (HURRELMANN & ULICH 1980, GEULEN & HURRELMANN 1980).

These approaches are oriented toward a specific meta-theoretical model, namely that of the subject who productively manages his/her reality. This model views personal development and social development in a dynamic perspective and as being mutualy dependent on one another.

1.1 The meta-theoretical model of the subject who productively manages reality

This model presents a tentative notion of the "object of investigation" in question, i.e. human development. It provides a point of departure for the choice and derivation of specific theories and methods, which are appropriate for the meta-theoretical model. Theories, in this context, are to be understood as systems of sentences which are logically consistent; methods are to be understood as specific procedures for the empirical control, correction and further elaboration of these theories.

The meta-theoretical model of the subject described here has as its central point the rejection of models of linear, single-factor determination of personality development which assume a passive, receptive formation of the individual, either through socio-economic or psycho-physical factors. It argues that personal development occurs in the process of productively managing both inner and outer reality. The assumption is that, from the beginning, every individual possesses certain capacities for managing reality which he/she uses and develops further. Another central assumption of this model is that the construction of systems of

orientation and action takes place as a result of this process and that the individual reacts to the appearance of reality in its various, situationally determined forms, namely his/her environment. This leads to changes in structure of both the person an his/her environment. In other words, what is being proposed here is a model of a "dialectic" relationship between the subject and the socially experienced reality, a model of the interdependent relations between individual and social development (HURRELMANN 1976, 1983a).

The meta-theoretical model shares many points of contact with models in other social sciences, especially those of developmental psychology. Along with sociologists and educationalists, these psychologists are looking for alternatives to the one-sided endogenic and exogenic theories which view development either as a psycho-physical system dwelling within the person or as impulses received from outside. Especially in the approach of the Life-Span Psychologists (OERTER 1978, BALTES ____ , REESE & LIPSITT 1980; OERTER & MONTADA 1982), it is the interaction between person and environment as a relation of mutuality, including the active response of a person to the social and ecological environment which is considered important.

The job of investigating personal development in all its areas and aspects is so many-sided that a variety of theoretical, discipline-based approaches are necessary, even if the fundamental meta-theoretical models have become more similar. The sociological and educational research will concentrate on its own central concept of socialization, for it is programmatic for the process of the social constitution of the human subject (HURRELMANN & ULICH 1980). Nothing can be said against a view of socialization as a "subordinate concept of development",

logically speaking, as MONTADA & OERTER propose. The more sociologically-oriented socialization research strongly stresses the analysis of the societal and material environment as one of the constitutive conditions of personal development. Alongside of the sociologically-oriented socialization research (including historical and economic approaches), it is reasonable in the sense of a division of labor for there to be a psychologically-oriented type of research, one of whose focal points should continue to be to investigate the intra-psychological mechanisms and the structure of the psychological apparatus at its various developmental stages (SILBEREISEN & MONTADA 1983).

The conceptual dimensions of the term "socialization" within the framework of this interdisciplinary procedure express the fact that the human subject is shaped by psychological and social factors and that he/she is constituted only in the process of social interaction. In other words, none of his/her functions and dimensions are formed independently of society, but only in the context of a concrete world of experience which is a social and historical reality (GEULEN 1977). The idea of the appropriation and management of inner and outer reality is an inherent part of this conception.

1.2 Implications of the model of the subject in research on adolescence and youth

Within the field of socialization research on adolescence and youth, the meta-theoretical model of the subject who productively manages his/her reality calls for a fresh look at human development during this phase of life. The adolescent's own perceptions, expectations, goals, and capacities have to be taken into consideration in a much more fundamental way than has been done before.

Life-span developmental psychology and socialization theory acknowledge the value of the meta-theoretical model when viewing adolescence and youth as a conflict-laden, transitional period in life, a stressful phase of development that poses distinctive tasks and challenges, as well as opportunities.

During this phase of the life-span, a major disequilibrium in the psycho-physical and psycho-social systems of the organism can be observed. One characteristic of the stressful transition or crisis is the general discontinuity with past situations that adolescents have previously been confronted with (HAMBURG 1980). There is almost no sphere in which it is possible to draw on an analogous past experience for support or guidance. Virtually the entire body is involued in the anatomical and physiological changes of pubertal growth, and the psychological development is closely related to the physical development. In adolescence, a totally new programming of behavioral patterns and modes becomes necessary, with a chance of either success or failure in solving these developmental tasks.

In terms of the HAVIGHURST (1972) conception of adolescent development, which is receiving renewed interest, young people have to solve several developmental tasks. A satisfactory solution of these tasks is a prerequisite for the establishment of adequate and secure social relationships and a personal and social identity. Compared to childhood, the expectations of society in relation to adolescence are not clearly defined. Adolescents are faced with the problem that, on the one hand, they do not have enough support from other social groups when cop ng with a developmental task and, on the other hand, they are not allowed to engage in competent and meaningful action because the opportunities necessary for social participation are not available. Adolescents thus have to pass through a phase of life marked by a high degree of role diffusion (JUGEND 81).

The changes in the conditions of life, which are due to overall societal and economic changes, have made the taking over of the adult role difficult. They have led to increased stress and tension for many young people. Adolescents need to have a great capacity for flexible adjustment to difficult environmental conditions during a phase of development which, in biological and psychological respects, is already demanding a very large measure of coping

capacity. Typically, a very high capacity of realistic perception and management of the complex social reality is a prerequisite for solving this task (HORNSTEIN 1982).

2. Theory construction in socialization research

Some of the steps necessary and appropriate for transforming the meta-theoretical model of the subject into adequate theoretical constructs will be discussed below. I will first comment on some general problems of the construction of theories and then discuss the development of a comprehensive theoretical model of socialization. In chapter (3) methodological implications will be discussed.

2.1 Components of a comprehensive theoretical model of socialization

The meta-theoretical model of the subject outlined above may be elaborated in various ways with concrete steps leading to the construction of theories. The model suggested here is clearly associated with the family of "action theories". In spite of their differences, these theories are capable of integrating individual and social phenomena.

The decision as to which specific theory will be chosen depends largely on the disciplinary training and experience of the researcher and his/her personal preference. The researcher is likely to look for a theory which has already been elaborated and which corresponds most closely to the meta-theoretical model of the subject. My own point of view as a psychologically and pedagogically-oriented sociologist, favours the theory of Symbolic Interaction developed by, among others, BERGER & LUCKMANN (1966). Symbolic interactionism offers the term "action" as a transformative construct for the integration of psychological and sociological sets of theoretical statements. The theory of symbolic interaction envisages an interdependent relationship between the human subject as a producer and constructor of reality and this reality as his/her product, which, in a process of institutionalization, becomes an objective reality to him.

This theory, however,has up to now only been applied with certain limitations in scope concerning the object of investigation. It does present some difficulties when it comes to analyzing the development of macro-social structures in society and assessing their importance to individual action. The same observation can be made about other specific theories which also stem from the family of action theories. Each specific theory has a bias toward selecting specific qualities and dimensions of the object of investigation in question (which, in our case, is human development). None of these theories permits a large-scale investigation of the object of investigation in terms of the meta-theoretical model as it has been presented here.

This model requires the construction of a theory which - at least potentially - integrates phenomena relevant to the socialization process on different levels of analysis. Ideally, the researcher should be able to include within a single analysis societal processes, the institutionalization process of social organizations and the activities of the formal agencies of socialization, the processes of interaction in small groups and situational contexts, the dynamics of the basic structure of the psycho-physical qualities of a person, and his/her conscious subjective reflection of all these phenomena.

Tc attain this goal, it will, as a rule, be necessary to apply more than one specific theory. In order to overcome the "micro-macro cleavage" (KEMENY 1976) in sociological analysis, it has been suggested as an extreme case to merge theories from different and disparate paradigms (HURRELMANN 1975). It seems to be necessary and promising for the purpose discussed here, to overcome the limitation and selectivity of a specific action theory by linking it with theory of social structure which, in fact, has an affinity to another level of analysis than the action theory first chosen.

In order to transform the meta-theoretical model of the subject into a comprehensive construction of a theory of socialization which avoids reductions and distortions in the analysis of the object of investigation, it would be helpful to elaborate a formal conceptual frame for organizing the procedure of theory construction. What I suggest is a conceptual frame of multiple levels of analysis composed of an intra-psychical individual level, an inter-individual/ interactional level, an institutional/ organizational level and a societal level. This conceptual framework has the function to serve as an aid for the choice of appropriate theories or parts of theories and for the process of constructing comprehensive theoretical models which describe and explain human development.

The elaboration of levels of analysis will help the researcher to identify interrelated aspects of the process of socialization in a systematic way, to identify and define the appropriate unit of analysis for each level, to relate the phenomena attached to each level to one another and to the phenomena on the adjoining level, and, if possible, to combine all these phenomena and their interrelations in a single unified structure. Figure 1 gives an example of a possible construction of four levels and their interrelations following GEULEN & HURRELMANN 1980.

The differentiation of "levels" of analysis merely serves the purpose of a schematic differentiation summarizing phenomena and concepts that belong together under a single aspect. It would be theoretically worthless to view these levels as isolated and artifical abstractions of reality. It is essential that they should be conceived of as constitutive parts of a comprehensive model in which each level of analysis provides relevant conditions for all other levels. It must be the goal of theory construction to make statements about all levels of analysis and to connect them with each other in a network of mutually related statements. It is the task of socialization theory to analyze developmental processes on each level, and subsequently, to analyze

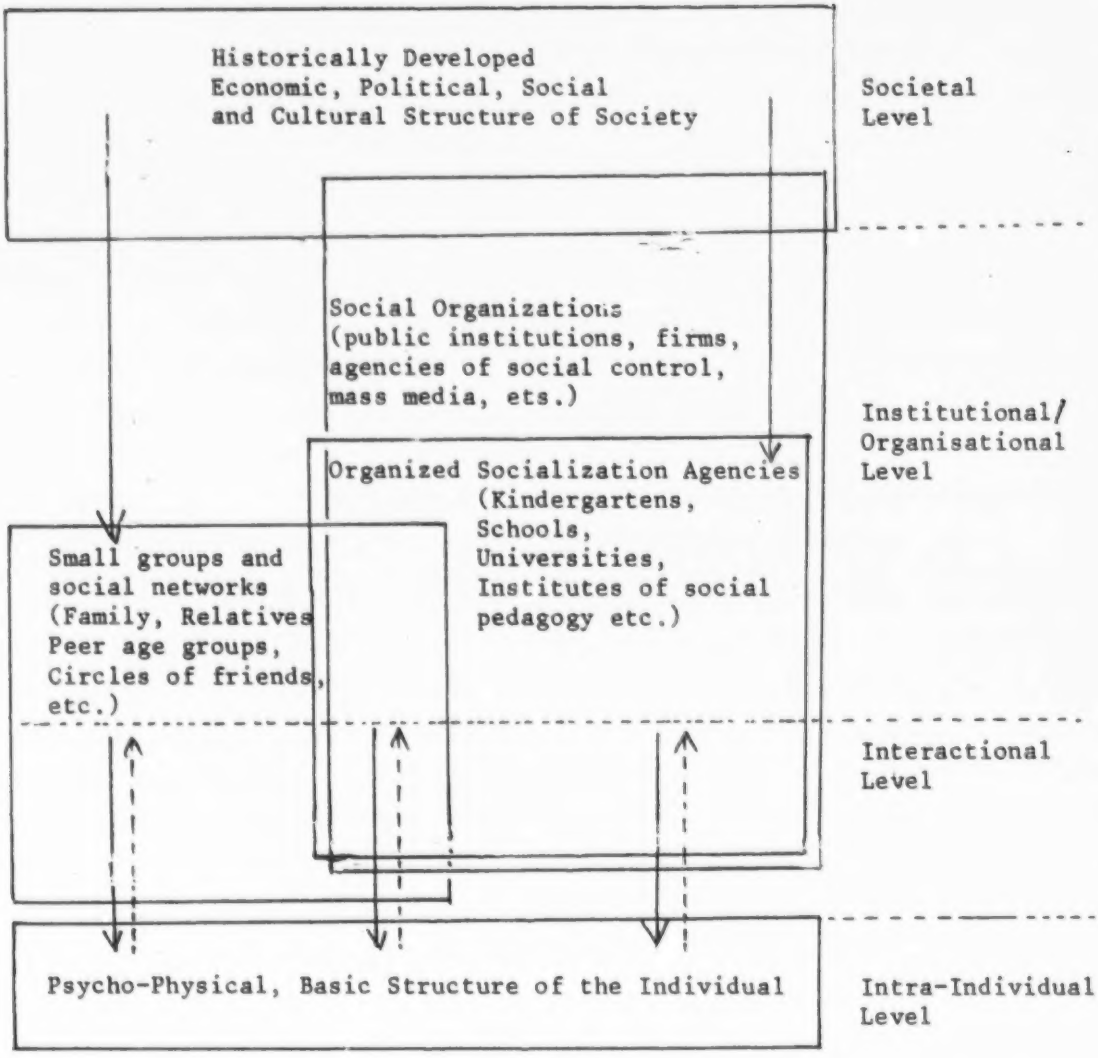


Figure 1: Components and Levels of a Comprehensive Model of Socialization

the developmental processes specific of each of these levels in regard to their interdependence and their mutually conditioned total relationship, in order to explain human development as the object of investigation.

Which levels of analysis will be considered, according to which criteria, and by means of which conceptual constructions they will be related to one another, depends essentially on the immediate interests of the researcher. It is the researcher who constructs the levels of analysis in order to arrive at a systematic grasp of reality in a systematic way. The procedure for establishing the levels is, for this reason, a question of academic convention.(Another example of the construction of levels of analysis in educational research is given by PERSELL, 1977.)

2.2 Implications of the comprehensive theoretical model for research on adolescence and youth

In order to explain adolescent development in terms of action-in-context, it is necessary to identify the different phenomena relevant to the process of socialization on different levels of analysis and to elaborate the dynamics of their interrelationships both within a level and between levels.

Thus, on the intra-individual level theoretical statements have to be elaborated about the interdependence of the development of the psycho-physical basic structures of the adolescent's personality. The basic premise of socialization theory is that the development of the processes of growth of physical and mental capacities, of emotions and affects follow their own patterns, but are overlaid with environmental social factors, which affect their temporal sequence and duration and their organization.

On the interactional level, the immediate situational constellation of the social and spatial environment must be taken into consideration. A constitutive part of this environment are small groups and institutionalized social networks with their own dynamics and social rules. The

membership in these face-to-face systems plays an important part in the development of children and adolescents. These systems are susceptible to the expectations on the part of the social environment and the systems on the organizational and societal level of analysis. But they are also susceptible to the expectations and actions of the developing adolescent. Thus, they serve as social areas of appropriation of the intersubjectively shared fund of situational definitions, social norms and values and, at the same time, for elaborating the intellectual and social skills of a person in order to manage social reality in a productive manner.

On the institutional/organizational level, the focus of analysis will be on those social systems which have been established especially for purpose of the socialization and education of the younger members of society. It seems to be a basic trend in industrial societies to assign the process of socialization to agencies such as kindergartens, schools, etc. The latter represent social worlds of living, which are largely insolated and separated from other spheres of social life, especially those typical of adult life. These educational agencies not only exert an influence on the personal development of their members by way of intended and conscious educational actions, but also through the manner of their organizational constitution.

There are still other systems on the organizational level which are not educational in character, but nevertheless highly relevant to the socialization process in adolescence. In addition, occupational, political and religious agencies, and the mass media partly supplement, overlap, and correct the influence of the educational agencies. It is typical of industrial societies that all social systems relevant to the function of socialization act side by side in accordance with their own specific systemic problems without concern for the resultant subsidiary problems which might be produced. The rules and perspectives of the various social systems mentioned are partitioned off from one another; they are partly in accord with and complementary to each other and

partly contradictory. This has the effect that adolescents are virtually forced to develop a high capacity for a self-reliant management of their own developmental process. Since the guiding principles of the conditions of socialization are not necessarily those governing human growth and development, this fact constitutes a big coping problem (cf ELDER 1975).

Concerning the societal level, most of the newly emerging social structures affecting the living conditions of young people have already been mentioned in section 1.2. It has often been overlooked, that political, cultural, social and, above all, economic changes are having strong repercussions on the process of development during the phase of adolescence and youth. The most recent example of this is the exclusion of many young people from the labor market.

Most of the empirical analyses come to the result, that the present situation of adolescence and youth demands a complex balancing act between areas of partial independence and partial dependence, claiming considerable mental energy without permitting a clear orientation toward the adult role and adult privileges. Many interesting research projects have started to study the personal strategies of coping with the difficult constellation of the conditions of life during this particular period. COLEMAN'S notion (1980 : 186) that different problems and issues come into focus and are tackled at different stages of development, so that the instances of stress resulting from the need to adopt new modes of behavior are rarely coincident at a certain point in time, has proved very helpful and inspiring. It follows from this that it is precisely in those adolescents who, for whatever reason, have more than one issue to cope with at a time that problems are most likely to occur.

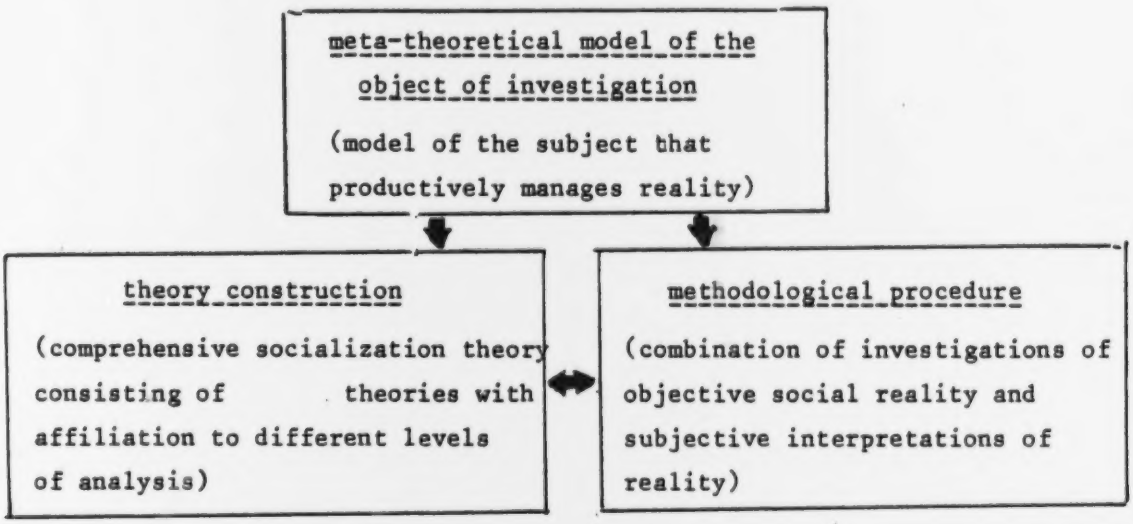
Moreover, recent projects take into consideration the historical, cultural, economic and social factors shaping

the distal and proximal environment of growing-up. Sociological analyses of this type, for example, have to account for the continuous prolongation of the phase of life defined as adolescence that we have experienced in the last decades. At present, this phase usually lasts from the onset of puberty at about 12 to 13 years until the coming of age at 18 years. Even working-class families, who have traditionally tended to urge their children into jobs as early in life as possible, now have to get accustomed to adolescence as a kind of social moratorium of a diffuse in-between character within the overall life-span. For all social classes, the long-range, socio-economic development has brought a separation of the production function from the family unit and its transformation into a more specialized unit of socialization and consumption, an increased specialization of job skills and an increased productivity of workers, resulting in the shrinking of the labor market. Shortage of jobs has become chronic, the time of entry into the labor market has been postponed for one to two years within one generation. The prolongation of time spent in school has gained a surrogate function without effectively cutting down youth unemployment (BAETHGE et al. 1983, HURRELMANN 1983b).

A result of these social changes, in historical terms, is the emergence of a new phase of life following adolescence which affects more and more young people and keeps them in a state of at least partial independence: A prolonged period of youth, of "post-adolescence", usually lasting from adult age at 18 to the age of 23, 25 or even more, allowing a relatively high degree of independence from parents, independence in peer relations, sexual behavior, moral and ethical orientation, political activity and consumer behavior, but not in the crucial area of vocational-economic activity. This phase of post-adolescence, which affects more and more young people of all social classes, only ends at the time when full independence from the family is achieved (SCHWEITZER & THIERSCH 1983).

3. Methodological procedures in socialization research

The meta-theoretical model, theory construction, and methodological procedures have a relationship of appropriateness, which can be seen as shown below:


meta-theoretical model of the object of investigation
(model of the subject that productively manages reality)
theory construction
(comprehensive socialization theory consisting of theories with affiliation to different levels of analysis)
methodological procedure
(combination of investigations of objective social reality and subjective interpretations of reality)

Integrative theoretical conceptions of research, as outlined in chapter 1, are confronted with substantial methodological problems at all stages of practical research. Most research strategies have up to now aimed at measuring as precisely as possible the effect of variables conceived of as independent on one variable considered dependent, and at statistically isolating this effect as far as possible. Apparently, this procedure is not wholly appropriate to the theoretical model of a comprehensive socialization theory with multiple levels of analysis. We must look for procedures that allow the combination of investigations of objective social reality and subjective interpretation of reality in order to follow the implications of the meta-theoretical model.

3.1 Combination of investigations of objective reality and subjective interpretations of reality

The existing research strategies necessary for multi-level analysis, especially statistical procedures, are still insufficient. What has been tested so far are versions of a two-level analysis which involve connections between

the qualities of individual actors and social units. In this way it is possible to ascertain some contextual effects and to avoid drawing inadmissable conclusions on the basis of the connections between variables on one level of analysis and applying them to connections existing on another. Up to now, we are only able to translate the theoretical model into a number of such steps of multi-variate analyses. The statistical procedures available permit only a restricted representation of the multi-level theoretical model, in particular the interrelations between variables at different levels of analysis. Concerning strategies of data collection and research design, the implications of the construction of a comprehensive theory of socialization are, that various types of scientifically controllable experience and its systematic documentation are favored. Appropriate research designs are those which enable descriptions and analyses of phenomena on one level of analysis related to those on other levels. Thus, we have to look for contextual and organizational variables in conjunction with variables such as cohort, historical, time, and age-related effects.

One of the methodological requirements of the meta-theoretical model is to carry out not only systematic investigations of the societal, organizational/institutional, interactional and intra-individual aspects relevant to the process of socialization (analysis of "objective" inner and outer reality), but also methodologically controlled investigations of the interpretations and explanations of this reality by individuals (analysis of "subjective" reality). The meta-theoretical model and the theoretical model require methodological procedures which permit a description and explanation of the management of reality in everyday situations and at decisive points of the life history of a person not only from the angle of the researcher, but also in terms of "inside out", i.e. from the angle of the subject. The researcher has to presuppose the capacity of his/her "object" of investigation to apply qualified, subjective knowledge of a problem competently in a complex situation . He/she has to attempt to reconstruct

this knowledge authentically in order to confront his/her scientific theory with it and insert it in the theory.

A "pluralistic" conception of method is the consequent completion of a comprehensive conception of theory, and this would contribute to an improvement in the relevance and applicability of research activities. The investigation of the subjective perception of social reality by individuals must always be confronted with and complemented by the results of the analysis of reality the researcher carries out. The intellectual construction of societal reality and the structuring of subjective meaning have to be put into relation to the scientific analysis of societal systems of production, administration, politics, education etc. The individual will be understood by me, the researcher, only, if I conceive of him or her in his or her social context, if I imagine him or her in conflict with this social context and then try to elaborate what room he/she objectively has for subjective interpretations, actions, and developments and how much of this he/she actually uses.

An analysis of the objective social world in which the individual lives is the necessary complement to the investigations of the subjective structuring of meaning in the social world. Only if I do both, can I, as a researcher, relate objective and subjectively perceived possibilities for action and alternatives of behavior to each other, and only then can I gain clues as to the relative value of subjective interpretations of reality. Only then can I relate the problem-solving capacity of a person to the objective and the subjectively perceived situational context and trace the consequences of successful or unsuccessful problem-solving attempts. Only then can I relate the creative, productive potential of the individual who is managing his/her social environment to the objective social and psychical features of that individual and that environment.

3.2 Implications for empirical investigations in research on adolescence and youth

In recent years, in the fields of socialization research and developmental psychology, some pioneering projects of investigation have been carried out on the basis of these proposals. Most of these projects try to realize some kind of contextual problem-oriented analysis, concentrating on the socially structured conditions of the actions and the courses of development of adolescents and youths facing specific developmental tasks, events or role transitions (see the review of LERNER 1982). Changes in the conditions of life affecting young people, which are due to overall societal, economic and cultural changes, are analyzed in terms of the problems they raise for the taking over of the adult role. The individual and collective capacities of realistic perception and productive management of the complex social conditions of life in adolescence and youth are reconstructed and confronted with a detailed analysis of the chances and limitations of unfolding the life course that are objectively given.

In our own project, which is part of an interdisciplinary research program on adolescence and youth of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, we analyzed the process of the subjective management of different courses of achievement careers by pupils in different types of secondary schools in the F.R.G. We started our analysis by describing the socio-historical development of the West German educational system and than asked for the subjective interpretation of the objectively given socio-economic constellation of educational and vocational opportunities. For this purpose we carried out interviews with adolescents of the age groups born 1962 - 1964 from 1977 on (ARBEITSGRUPPE SCHULFORSCHUNG 1980; HURRELMANN 1983b).

During the last decades, a steady expansion of the school system has been observed in West Germany. Whether children go on from elementary school into a trade, a clerical job or to university: the numbers that stay on at school in order to get a better qualification are rising. The proportion of school graduates with qualifications entitling them to enter a course of higher education has tripled within 30 years, and that of those who have obtained the qualifying grade for entrance to university (Abitur) has quadrupled. More than 55 % of an age group of young people today at least take O levels after 10 years of schooling; 30 years ago the figure was 15 per cent.

These figures are symptomatic of a sweeping social change, generally characterized as "educational expansion". This educational expansion has brought an improvement of the educational opportunities for adolescents in all social strata. Even children and parents whose background is traditionally not conducive to education have apparently reacted to the change in social values and, above all, the changes in the labor market by recognizing the increased demand for education. At the same time, however, contractive tendencies are becoming predominant in the labor market, and, additionally, the demographic "wave" of the "baby boom" has now reached the labor market. All these factors taken together mean that young people without a socially valuable school-leaving certificate find themselves in a hopeless situation in the labor market. Even those who have completed their O levels cannot be sure to find a job, thereby successfully managing the transition to the main social domain of adulthood. The improvement of educational opportunities is not accompanied by an improvement of occupational opportunities.

In order to analyze the subjective interpretation of the objectively given socio-economic constellation of educational and vocational opportunities, we carried out in-depth interviews with adolescents of the age groups born 1962 - 1964 who, at school, had been either extremely successful or (the other half of the sample) extremely unsuccessful. Parents and teachers were also interviewed. Interviews have been repeated every year since 1977. The analysis of the interviews follows a specific procedure of thematically based selection developed by the Research Group.

In our study, we were able to confirm the "mechanistic" and "finalistic" nature of the criteria of interpretation by which "significance" is attached to learning at school. The ultimate purpose of school is considered by the majority of pupils and teachers to be the preparation for later life. Significance is attributed to school in so far as it contributes to the shaping and mastering of the time after school, i.e. the future. At the same time, pupils particularly emphasize the aspect of selection and status-assignment of socialization at school: the result of learning processes is to some extent considered having an exchange value when

entering the period of life that begins after school. Thus, pupils cling to a criterion according to which the real reason for what happens at school will only manifest itself later on, and thus attendance at school has a hidden rationale which is difficult to grasp while pupils are still at school. It is possible for them to tolerate this, as we were able to show in our investigation, because school is looked upon by the pupils and teachers on the secondary level as a place of work, and activities at school are organized on industrial bureaucratic lines following the laws of paid labor.

As our longitudinal analysis of the processes of mastering and coping with this situation has shown, the "educational expansion" is not regarde as an improvement of educational chances by the birth cohorts questioned. On the contrary, young people perceive themselves as being in a stressful situation with a specific demand placed on them, to hold or even improve the social status of their parents. During the last years of compulsory schooling, Hauptschule pupils live with an undercurrent of fear, that the transition from school to employment might not result in a socially acceptable position. Even those who make an effort at school cannot be certain of achieving the social status of their parents, let alone bettering it. This fear results in an ever-diminishing demand in any future career.

With Gymnasium students, this insecurity expresses itself primarily in a feverish attempt to set themselves apart from those attending Hauptschule whose status is considered to be much lower.

Research projects of this kind based on research designs and strategies of data collection, documentation and interpretation which consider the methodological implications of the concept of comprehensive socialization theory, face several substantial methodological problems and shortcomings in all phases of practical research. But in my view, they also offer a chance to overcome the unfruitful split between the paradigms of "quantitative" and "qualitative" methodology. They mark the points of consensus which should find expression in the recently begun developments in the fields of the psychology and sociology of human living conditions. They allow to correct, control, and elaborate empirially the theories of socialization which follow the notion of man as a productive manager of his/her reality.

In order to gather more experience with "mixed" and "pluralistic" conceptions of method and design in socialization research, we need more practice with various types of data

collection, documentation, and interpretation. Concerning research design we must not only look for purely nomothetic strategies in which the individual cases are subsumed under general laws. In view of the enormous variety of social conditions which transcend cultures and subcultures, time and age, greater attention must be paid to the development of ideographic methods and case studies. We need a documentary analysis in the tradition of socio-historical research as well as large-scale survey research and - possibly within the same survey as a subsample - case studies in the tradition of biographical interviews and interpretative analysis. The research projects mentioned in this essay are following up these proposals.

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